

Suburban Life

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On the holidays

Dinners delivered to those who eat alone

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

APPROXIMATELY 1,350 people in six surrounding counties had a Thanksgiving dinner personally delivered to them on the holiday.

They are people who have no family, friends or neighbors who would have invited them in or visited them to share a festive meal.

That number is 30 percent of the homebound who are on the lists to receive Meals-on-Wheels five times a week.

The Monday through Friday government-financed meals don't go out on holidays or weekends.

Without the contributions of time and money to Holiday Meals-on-

Wheels, "that segment of our elderly would just have gone hungry on a very special day," said Colleen Blaesing of the local Area Agency on Aging.

"Holiday Meals-on-Wheels was a success from the onstart," said Mary DiManno, the nutrition services coordinator for Farmington Hills.

"It will be funding four holidays next year. And our area has never had a problem with volunteers. Our regular volunteers — the ones who deliver five times a week — take a holiday for themselves and a whole new group comes up to give a couple hours of their time on a holiday to see that someone who is homebound gets their holiday meal.

"We ask for a very little amount of time, but very often they asked to

be scheduled so they give more time so they will have some extra time to visit. And so many times they bring another something extra — maybe a flower, maybe a gift — to go out on the tray.

"Several times we've had entire families deliver the meal. I know it adds a something special to their own at-home holiday," she said.

BLESING AND DiManno both give credit to the big boost in Holiday Meals-on-Wheels in southern Michigan to Jimmy Schmidt, owner of Detroit's Rattlesnake Club.

Schmidt was involved in Holiday Meals-on-Wheels when he lived in New York City. He patterned the fund-raising and coordination here after the programs that began in New York and in Los Angeles.

The contributions that make Holiday Meals-on-Wheels possible come from individuals, organizations and corporations as well as proceeds from special events.

"The fund-raiser this fall at the Rattlesnake brought us 12 corporate sponsors — the highest we've ever had — and I can't tell you how many volunteers," Blaesing said.

"The Area Agency on Aging started the program in 1986 which ensured the delivery of a Christmas or Hanukkah meal and we keep picking up speed. Each year the number of holidays we can cover continues to rise as the increased contributions provide more revenue."

Because not all Meals-on-Wheels food providers are able to staff and operate their kitchens during the holidays, other locations for preparation had to be found. They were found in hospitals, nursing homes and even local restaurants.

Staff photos
by
Tom Arnett

Botsford Hospital prepares the holiday dinners for the homebound here.

MAKING SURE that everyone in Farmington and Farmington Hills who needs a home-delivered meal on the holiday is on the list, scheduling the volunteers' time and many times drawing a map for a new volunteer amounts to a juggling act for DiManno, who was in Botsford Hospital's kitchen Thanksgiving Day with her check list.

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Ida Serona's Farmington home is in such a state of ill repair she spent Thanksgiving Day packing in readiness to move. When her holiday meal was delivered she thanked the volunteer by saying, "People are so good."



Mary Valade (at left), who brought her husband and two children with her to deliver the holiday meal, looks over her route and her map prepared by Mary DiManno at the pickup spot near Botsford Hospital's kitchen. DiManno is nutrition services coordinator for Farmington Hills.



Paul Williams (at left) hands out colorfully Thanksgiving dinner to be delivered with the wrapped baskets of fruit from his station wagon, a something extra for the homebound's Holiday Meals-on-Wheels by volunteers Colleen and Patrick Williams.

Sweet Adelines

Barbershoppers are in tune and ready for 'Broadway Rhythm'

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

JUBILATION, a Sweet Adelines quartet from Illinois that took the international championship in 1985, will be the guest stars in "Broadway Rhythm," a show of barbershop singing, dancing and show biz glitter at 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10 in West Bloomfield High School.

It will be the first full-fledged production produced by Oakland Shores Sweet Adelines directed by Jacki Work, a Farmington Hills resident and veteran of Sweet Adeline know-how.

Work said she's been dancing and singing since the age of 3, went to her first Sweet Adelines open rehearsal about 20 years ago, "and has been booked every since."

She took the directorship of the

Oakland Shores Sweet Adelines about two years ago and placed the chorus in the top six in regional competition two years running. Last year Oakland Shores took the third place spot in the showmanship category, a feat she is proud of since she was working with a relatively new chorus of only 40 members, when competition choruses numbered from 80-100.

Sweet Adeline Chris Spurr said of her, "Having Jacki Kaye Work as our director is an exhilarating, entertaining, educational, amusing, amazing, lively, enjoyable, promising, enriching and pleasurable experience."

WORK'S OWN past experience in putting on a show will put Oakland Shores Sweet Adelines in a variety of songs and skills circled around hobo clowns who are lured to the glitter of 42nd Street in "Broadway Rhythm."

She got that experience directing three other Michigan-based Sweet Adelines choruses, as a Sweet Adelines director of musical activities, and coaching several Sweet Adelines quartets and choruses.

She has sung bass for The Chord Motor Company, a one-time regional championship quartet, and has been master of ceremonies for chapter

shows, regional and international competitions.

In addition to her work with Oakland Shores, she directs The Salvation Army Singers of Farmington Hills.

She is self-employed as an antique jewelry and silver dealer, and is pursuing a degree in gemology at Gemological Institute of America — "between getting the chorus ready for shows and competitions," she said.

Her job as a Sweet Adelines director, she said, "is the final say on everything. We have committees for make-up, lighting, staging, script, sound, the whole works, but I have the final say."

ANOTHER JOB, no less important, is fulfilling the Sweet Adelines' motto of "Harmonizing the World."

"We do this by just getting out and singing," she said. "We try to fill requests as much as it is possible — and if we can't get an entire chorus to an opening, a nursing home, a party, a gathering, wherever we're asked, then we send at least a quartet, or double quartet," she said.

Tickets for "Broadway Rhythm" are \$7, available from Jo Gray, 363-1181 or Hilda Butler, 682-8450, or at the door of Bloomfield High School auditorium, on Orchard Lake Road, north of Maple.



Sweet Adelines choreographer Penny Savage and Kay Kobay, who is chairing the costume committee, will do a tap routine in "Broadway Rhythm."



Jacki Work as she appears when she is directing Oakland Shores Chapter of Sweet Adelines (at right) and as she appears as clown for her part in "Broadway Rhythm" (above). At left she is with Judith Reiter in costume for a selection from "Mary Poppins."

